

Masthead Logo

The Iowa Review

Volume 10
Issue 3 *Summer*

Article 25

1979

Florence Nightingale Receives a Visitor

Margot Kriel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kriel, Margot. "Florence Nightingale Receives a Visitor." *The Iowa Review* 10.3 (1979): 109-109. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2507>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Florence Nightingale Receives a Visitor · *Margot Kriel*

Don't ask me if I remember
your father. I cut the blood-soaked
cloth from his legs. After the Battle
of Inkerman, men lay in their own filth.
I ordered scrubbing brushes and beds.

The minarets of Mihrimah Cami mosque
rise outside the second-floor window.
I coil ropes of linen. At night
a nurse falls in her own stupor,
skirts stain a punctured chest.
She is removed to England.

For thirty years I've lain here,
letters and viceroys pass the straits.
Your father lived with a lost leg.

Under the dome of Hagia Sophia
a cat stalks, its eyes wide
like the wake eyes of wounded
in pain. Divine wisdom
brought me here, out of whale-boned
convention, to treat an army.
Each crusted face and open wound,
I bathe and wrap.
Distant and sharp, a bell rings,
pebble slaps the surface.
I fall through clear water to rest,
my head to the East.

Don't think I cannot see you.
Like your father, you want me
to fall in your eyes. Young man,
I am already drowned. I snubbed
Lord Herbert before he died.